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## **Australian Women's Anti-Nuclear Leadership: The Framing of Peace and Social Change**

By Yulia Maleta<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

This article addresses a gap on hegemonic masculinity/emphasized femininity and essentialism/constructivism within the Environmental New Social Movement (eNSM). Utilizing my interviews with Australian women members of environmentalist New Social Movement Organisations (eNSMOs), including eNGOs, academic institutions and the Greens party, I adopt a constructivist approach towards emphasized femininity, arguing that women-led strategies, strengthened through agentic competence contributes to global peace, whilst challenging the patriarchal control of environmental governance (Cockburn 1988, 2012). My feminist sociopolitical model is framed by resistance to ruling class masculinity, emphasizing participants' gender performativity, advocating anti-nuclear agendas (Warren 1999, Gaard 2001, Butler 2013). Constructivism is relayed by the way women activists' resist patriarchy as a barrier, in terms of 'hierarchy', 'man-made decisions' and 'power...terrible nasty stuff'. Moreover, women accommodate emphasized femininity as an empowering enabler, framed by women-led strategies, described as 'revolutionary', 'mother and child', 'social responsibility' and 'environmental protection', whilst advocating sustainability (Leahy 2003, Connell 2005, Culley and Angelique 2010, Maleta 2012).

*Keywords:* Emphasized femininity, women, constructivism, anti-nuclear, sustainability.

### **Introduction**

The recent hand-holding of North and South Korean Presidents gives rise to the notion of peace and environmental justice, and greater reconciliation between these nations, along with aspirations for world-wide nuclear disarmament. Such apparent warmth between leaders suggests hopes for global peace (which could also be perceived as an example of emphasized femininity leadership, yet performed by male politicians). The proliferation of atomic weapons and nuclear missiles, and leading political leaders' goals to eliminate such weapons, does not delineate from the pervasion of nuclear technology as a core energy source for many nations (Rankin and Gale 2003, Culley and Angelique 2010). Although official talks addressing anti-nuclear proliferation appear to be a step in the right direction (Rudd 2018), nuclear power, as a reliant energy source, inclusive of the developed and developing world, is a key barrier towards a safer world (Culley and Angelique 2003, 2010). Moreover, my anti-war peaceful ethos is framed by women activists'

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<sup>1</sup> Yulia Maleta's research objective is to address feminism and environmentalism within the frame of sociopolitical New Social Movements. As a qualitative researcher of Australian women's experiences within renewables governance, who has published internationally on gender, politics, organisations and the environment, she aims to contribute cutting-edge empirical knowledge to the global interdisciplinary field. She has a PhD in social sciences, and has held academic posts at the University of Sydney, University of NSW and Western Sydney University. In particular, her academic employment at the University of Sydney's School of Social and Political Sciences, such as, the Department of Government and International Relations and Department of Sociology and Social Policy, has inspired her intellectual development and creative flair in academic rigour.

*emphasized femininity* social change leadership, advocating for renewable energy. Arguably, emphasized femininity, akin to women's agentic competence in sustainable energy leadership, challenges the patriarchal hegemonic control of the nuclear industry (Connell 1995, Warren 1999, Connell 2005, Shiva 2005, Cockburn 2012, World Nuclear Organisation 2016). Notably, the future of global governance is in sustainable energy, aligned with my peaceful sociopolitical goals, in which women play a leadership role in renewable technological development (Shiva 2008, Alston 2011, Clean Energy Council 2014, Ajani 2015, Maleta 2015, WIE 2018).

As a feminist sustainable sociologist, I view nuclear technological energy with great suspicion, for it is a time bomb waiting to go off, and the sooner it is eradicated, the better. This applies to nuclear arms along with nuclear energy as a source. Every ten years or so, there is a nuclear-oriented disaster, caused by man-made error, or even a natural disaster. This is evident with the Three Mile Island (TMI) (partial) nuclear reactor meltdown in Pennsylvania, 1979; the more catastrophic Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion, in 1986; and more recently, the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, whereby an earthquake and tsunami devastated the town and its' nuclear power plant (Culley and Angelique 2003, 2010, Salleh 2011, World Nuclear Organisation 2016). Although the human fatalities were higher in the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters, incidents of cancer-related deaths were well-reported, as a consequence, of partial and complete nuclear plant meltdowns (Culley and Angelique 2003, 2010, Salleh 2011, World Nuclear Organisation 2016). In the wake of such disasters, women advocates, as members of eNGOs, grassroots organisations or as politicians, readily organised action networks, striving to protect communities and the natural world from dire pollutants, inclusive of the human and nonhuman (Salleh 2011). In the wake of the Fukushima disaster, women-led efforts were curtailed by patriarchal structures, in how Japanese female politicians struggled to have their voice heard (Salleh 2011).

Contentiously, the eNSM is framed by structural and ideological representations of (in)justice/(in)equity; this framing is further replicated by the global patriarchal control of environmental organisational governance, along with the ruling power of men, situated in a position of privilege, even in renewable energy boards (Connell 2005, 2009, Walby 2011, Shiva 2014, Carnegie Clean Energy 2018). However, my feminist-environmentalist constructivist framing of injustice/inequity (supported by my participatory accounts with women activists), contextualised by agentic competence, further frames women's 'revolutionary' leadership potential of sustainable technological development (Cockburn 1988, Culley and Angelique 2003, Cockburn 2012, Clean Energy Council 2014, McFarland 2014, Pollack 2015, WIE 2018). My methodological framework of emphasized femininity resistance to patriarchy is conceptualised by empowering women-led strategies, described in my interviews as 'revolutionary', 'mother and child', 'social responsibility' and 'environmental protection', aspires to improve the leadership status of women in global renewables organisational governance. I draw upon Australian and international studies that pinpoint the barriers/enablers, impacting the anti-nuclear-anti-toxic waste initiatives of women campaigners (Rankin and Gale 2003, Culley and Angelique 2010, Maleta 2011, 2012). In an Australian sociopolitical context, Rankin and Gale's study on anti-nuclear women activists, opposing a second nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights, during the conservative Howard-led Liberal era of the early 2000s, identified a gap in participation:

Since the 1980s, the overwhelming majority of activists opposing the nuclear plant have been women. This parallels the US experience, where women have formed the core of campaigns against toxic industries. The men who have become

involved in the campaign, with few exceptions, have been employees of environmental movement organizations (2003, pp. 145-46).

Evidently, the gender difference in paid and unpaid participation within an anti-nuclear-toxic waste advocacy is comparative to an international eNSM framework. The 'otherness' of women in executive leadership, represents a prevailing gender and organisational barrier (Rankin and Gale 2003, Culley and Angelique 2010, Maleta 2012). Another barrier is the numerical superiority of men in renewable Boards, whereby women are better represented in not-for-profit based-renewables organisations (Carnegie Clean Energy 2018, WIE 2018). Additionally, the patriarchal control of the global nuclear energy industry represents gendered organisational barriers for women advocates pursuing healthier, more robust sustainable technological solutions (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, Gaard 2001, Culley and Angelique 2010, Maleta 2015).

In my constructivist sociopolitical approach, aligned with a modelling of emphasized femininity as performative, I pinpoint the greater leadership potential of women in renewables energy development, relative to agentic (negotiation of gendered power relations) technical competence (skilled performativity of environmentalism) (Cockburn 1988, Gaard 2001, Leahy 2003, Culley and Angelique 2010). Gender as a performance is enacted through women's assertion of their roles and negotiation of their social and environmental change ambitions within complex, executive hierarchies of power, often sites of male privilege (Greer 1999, Connell 2005, Butler 2007, 2011, 2013). Also, women's performativity of gender involves a recognition/resistance of hegemonic masculinity, and, arguably, a recognition/accommodation of emphasized femininity, whereby the latter is appropriated as an empowering framework against ruling social and industrial elites, indicative of the nuclear industry along with uranium mining and more recently, fracking (Alston 2011, 2013, Heuer and Yan 2017). Although the ruling power of men prevails within non-sustainable energy sources, women environmentalists' agentic technical skill, aligned with emphasized femininity-framed resistance towards hegemonic masculinity, suggests that women's greater leadership of renewables technology, is a viable platform for environmental change.

## **My Research Project**

### *Methods and Demographics*

My research objective is to address gender-environmentalist intersections of (in)justice and (in)equity framing the anti-nuclear-anti-toxic-waste eNSM/eSMOs, along with methodological insights to constructivism/essentialism and emphasized femininity/masculine hegemony (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, Gaard 2001, Leahy 2003, Connell 2005, MacGregor 2010, Gaard 2011, Vildåsen et al. 2017). This methodological scope is supported by my interviews and thematic insights to women's emphasized femininity leadership resistance to patriarchy and ruling class masculinity. As Chief Qualitative Investigator, I led a research project (as part of my PhD study), in which I interviewed 31 Australian women members of renewables organizational governance: the Australian Greens party, International eNGOs, grassroots organizations and academic institutions. Notably, this research was approved by Western Sydney University's Human Ethics department. As a former PhD candidate of Western Sydney University, I officially graduated in 2015. This article, framing anti-nuclear advocacy plus robust women-led sustainability agendas is contextualized by a research sub-set of my sample; a snapshot that represents anti-nuclear-anti-toxic-waste activist/advocacy leadership resistance, and constructivist representations of agentic competence. Hence, constructivism is aligned with agency plus skill, in which women's gender

performances, demonstrate an assertion of leadership, and challenge towards the pervasive power of the nuclear energy industry, along with men-led direction of global environmental governance (Gaard 2001, Butler 2007, 2011, 2013, Maleta 2011, MacGregor 2010, 2014). This sample includes data from interviews with 7 Australian women activists/advocates: 2 eNGO members (Barbara, Deborah), 2 academic activists' (Maggie, Rachel), 1 grassroots activist (Gillian) and 2 members of the Australian Greens party (Jennifer, Stacey). Pseudonyms protect identity.

In my overall sample, a number of participants are members of the Greens party, and this party is historically framed by anti-nuclear policies plus patriarchal resistance, further comparative to Greens policies around the world (Maleta 2011, Gauja and Jackson 2016, Australian Greens, Our Policies, 2018). On a global scale, the Greens, as a party, vocally advocates for peace, grassroots democracy, gender equity, social and environmental justice and ecological sustainability (Carter 2013 Australian Greens, Our Policies, 2018). As a party, the Greens constitute highly educated, skilled individuals aspiring towards social and environmental equity, along with a high female representation (Raunio 2015). Although Green's women have achieved success as Senators and Leaders, they struggle with ruling class masculinity and 'the boys club' of governance (Maleta 2011). This is not specific to the party, but to the global terrain of non-Greens politics.

Arguably, patriarchy is a barrier whereas agentic competence frames feminist empowerment. My framework focuses on emphasized femininity leadership resistance to male-dominated cultural structures, along with participant's skilled agency, as leaders. Participants were selected by a general recruitment drive; that is an initial expression of interest in writing. Interested participants were invited to contact the Chief Investigator, via email. My total sample included 31 women salaried and volunteer environmentalists. The overall interview process was approximately between 2009 to 2011, with the last interview achieved in 2011. In this sample, most women are salaried environmentalists, except Gillian, a grassroots activist, who has worked in education. Yet, environmental work is not a 9-5 job, for a number of participants perform their roles after hours. My focus on eNGOs, academia and the Greens involves assessing gender hegemony and strategies towards environmental change within non-political and political organizations.

Concerning social demographics, the majority of participants are of Anglo-Celtic ethnicity, middle-class backgrounds, tertiary qualified and work in the professions. In this sample, one participant, Barbara, identifies of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry. The majority reside in socially progressive suburbs. Most are aged 35 and over, married or living with partners, with one or more children. Most reside in urban areas of a large Australian city, with three in regional areas. In this sample, two reside in a regional locale, reflecting a comparative urban-regional demographic representation.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, which enables me to draw upon detailed meaningful insights. Each interview was conducted individually, and lasted 90-120 minutes. It was tape-recorded and qualitatively analyzed. According to Punch, the semi-structured interview approach enables feminist qualitative researchers to focus on perceptions, meanings and social reality, thereby, contributing knowledge (2005, pp. 168-72). A feminist lens applied to my qualitative data enables me to gather descriptive data and pinpoint participants' recognition/resistance towards dominant masculinist cultures. Women-led approaches, aligned with strategies of consensus building and collaboration, signify the validity of emphasized femininity as an empowering engagement strategy (Connell 1995, Leahy 2003, Butler 2007, 2013). 'Feminine or women-led' approaches, thus, challenge masculinist institutionalized power and patriarchal hierarchies, defined by male privilege (Connell 2005, 2009, Walby 2011, Alston

2013, Mellor 2013). The intersection of emphasized femininity and hegemonic masculinity, thus, relates to the way participants' resist dominant masculinist approaches (as repressive) and advocate women-led strategies (as empowering).

I apply a feminist lens to my interviews, whilst pinpointing core themes and insights on women-led sustainability (versus nuclear plus resource-based) direction, in order to address research gaps, along with intersections of emphasized femininity/hegemonic masculinity and essentialism/constructivism (Gaard 2001, Culley and Angelique 2010, Cockburn 2012). My objective is informed by an anti-war ethos and peace-making approach, in which I aspire to contribute an emphasized feminist model, informed by empowering women-led strategies (Warren 1999, Cockburn 2000, 2012). Concerning a feminist resistance strategy, I aim to frame the discourse surrounding patriarchy into a type of 'resistant femininity' (Connell 1995, Leahy 2003, p. 109). In my argument, emphasized femininity, as a form of leadership resistance, has the potential to challenge masculinist institutionalized power, and the power of hegemonic ruling elites.

### **Emphasized Femininity Leadership and Gender Performativity**

In my sociopolitical modelling of environmentalism, 'performativity' is framed by women-led resistance towards non-sustainable industries along with the structural and ideological representations that enable such proliferation. In my argument, structural relations of power and cultural representations of gender are framed by the pervasive power of hegemonic ruling class masculinity, whereby emphasized femininity is framed as a viable form of 'performative' resistance to masculine hegemonic dominance (Leahy 2003, Connell 2005, Butler 2007, 2013, Donaldson and Poynting 2013). My framing of agentic technical competence, is an empowering point from which to elevate women's identities and to stress a constructivist approach that is resistant towards multiple frames of (in)equity and (in)justice (Culley and Angelique 2010, Gaard 2011, Cockburn 2012). Regarding agentic competence, I emphasize the power of constructivism over essentialism, in that the performative act of women in the eNSM whilst representing an empowering premise towards environmental change.

Regarding essentialism and constructivism, one could even say that renewable energy is an example of more essentialized or feminine technological application, whereas nuclear energy is more conducive to hegemonic masculinity, or in this instance, patriarchal technologies. Yet women's appropriation of renewable energy, is conducive to a performative act of active resistance towards the masculine control of environmental governance, and further exemplifies women's agentic technical competence. Hence, an assumed essentialist technology can be appropriated by women professional and grassroots campaigners within a constructivist 'performative' framework, enhanced by my sociopolitical modelling of resistant feminism (Leahy 2003). On that note, the balance of the future is more so on sustainable versus resource-based approaches, and the greater leadership of women here is vital in order to achieve a higher, stronger representation of wind, wave and solar energy solutions (Gaard 2001, Shiva 2005, 2008, Maleta 2011, McFarland 2014, Shiva 2014, Ajani 2015).

My methodological insight to agentic technical competence along with the framing of sustainable solutions versus nuclear energy is supported by feminist environmentalist studies. In particular, Culley and Angelique's qualitative analysis of long-term Three Mile Island (TMI) activists, found that gender was perceived to be both a barrier and enabler to activism (2003, pp. 445-48). Despite gender barriers and stereotypes of competence, Culley and Angelique (2003,

2010) found that women were strong leaders within the grassroots antinuclear U.S. movement, which supports findings in global studies (Rankin and Gale 2003, Salleh 2011, Cockburn 2012). Culley and Angelique (2003) identified the way women activists', in particular mothers, who had no formal training in nuclear energy, became competent in nuclear jargon through self-training, and applied this to their activism. Such knowledge, represents an empowering women-led direction, thereby, challenging the hegemonic dominance of the nuclear industry (Culley and Angelique 2010, Maleta 2012). This except highlights the way agentic competence intersects within complex power-based social hierarchies, framed by the sociopolitical agendas of TMI women anti-nuclear campaigners:

These women's gender initially was experienced as a barrier to their antinuclear activist efforts. To overcome this barrier, women took it upon themselves to become educated about nuclear technology...They developed a critical perspective on sociopolitical events and came to understand power asymmetries...For local antitoxic women activists, the combined effects of gender, local knowledge, and technical skills may create a powerful force for social change- a force that can sustain them through decades of resistance from industry (Culley and Angelique 2003, p. 458).

As an activist strategy, feminism is, thus, a theoretical position and a political movement that is grassroots in its conception and application of social and environmental change goals (Mallory 2006, p. 36). It is practiced in professional and grassroots contexts, encompassing public and private spheres. Culley and Angelique showed that women challenged and redefined the political power structure, as agents of environmental justice and change, even when social change was a core challenge (2003, pp. 445-48).

### **Feminism as an Anti-war Ethos and Peace-Making Model within eNSMs**

My interpretation of feminism, as an anti-war ethos and peace-making model, is supported by research on women's peaceful protests within an international eNSM framework. Women's agentic competence has been expressed in landmark peace movements, such as at Greenham Common RAF base, in 1983, where women formed a human chain, in their protest against atomic weapons (Cockburn 2012, p. 41). For example, women activists' organised 'a 70,000-person, fourteen-mile human chain linking Greenham to the atomic weapons establishments...' (Cockburn 2012, p. 41). As an example of women-led resistance to industrial and military elites, the Greenham Common Peace Camp imagined 'new forms of protest' (Cockburn 2012, p. 41). Cockburn's (2000, 2012) insight to women's peace advocacy enables me to emphasize the power of women-led peaceful social change acts, whilst challenging ruling sociopolitical elites. Hence, women's skilled leadership and collective resistance to atomic energy and nuclear weapons, exemplified by a peace march, represents a covert yet robust approach, in its resistance to ruling social and industrial elites.

Environmental justice movements are platforms to address inequalities along the lines of gender, race/ethnicity and class/socio-economic status. Gaard's (2001) critique of U.S-Canadian energy companies, Canadian Hydro-Quebec and Manitoba Hydro, enables me to consider the gender and social inequalities that constitute women's activist struggle with corporate power. Within an egalitarian framework resistant to patriarchy, Gaard (2001) emphasized the resistance

of women grassroots campaigners, whilst criticising the corporate appropriations of water power, relative to human and nonhuman frames: ‘gendered, cultural assumptions about water, power, and human relations have led to creating a water-power infrastructure that perpetuates environmental sexism, environmental racism, and environmental classism’ (Gaard 2001, p. 157). Traditional conceptions of power and energy perpetuate gender and social inequalities: ‘water, from poor people, from people of color, from women-without giving back anything of sustenance’ (Gaard 2001, p. 167). Gaard’s (2001) insight to power relations informs my feminist interpretation of domination/subordination and women’s struggle with agency:

Domination of others—whether in the form of rape, slavery, animal experimentation, colonialism, clear-cutting, or damming—has been called “power over” and is part of the violent and oppressive framework that feminists reject... It is this peaceful use of power that feminists advocate; its implications for social justice, and for environmental justice, and for sustainable energy production can be denied only at the risk of human and ecological health (2001, pp. 167-68).

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Anti-Nuclear and Anti-Toxic Leadership Competence: A Revolutionary Goal*

In my methodological approach, constructivism aligned with emphasized femininity leadership resistance towards patriarchy along with hegemonic masculinity, frames the power of a subversive feminine identity, whilst challenging the ruling power of men within environmentalist executive hierarches (MacGregor 2010, Di Chiro 2011, Donaldson and Poynting 2013). My constructivist approach, framed by empowering forms of women-led agentic competence is strengthened by an egalitarian peace-making sociopolitical model, further framed by empirical insights to anti-nuclear-anti-toxic activism (Gaard 2001, 2011, Butler 2011, 2013, MacGregor 2014, Vildåsen et al. 2017). Such activism is contextualised by my interview data and themes on subversive identity, representative of empowering forms of women-led direction as well as agentic technical competence (Culley and Angelique 2010). My constructivist argument is, therefore, framed by emphasized femininity resistance towards male dominated structural hierarchies, whereby women’s agentic competence, challenges essentialized views of women/femininity. Arguably, women’s negotiation of power and demonstration of skill, represents constructivism as a performative action, encompassing an empowering platform towards social and environmental change goals (Warren 1997, 1999, Butler 2007, 2013, MacGregor 2014, Vildåsen et al. 2017).

Through a feminist qualitative lens on my seven interview accounts, participatory data reveals a compelling insight to anti-nuclear strategic activism. Contemplating a sustainable framework, academic activist Maggie ([audio] 2010), in this section, argues that: ‘we need a revolution’ whilst Rachel’s ([audio] 2010) ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘working her own way through’ suggests that women-led approaches are defined by individualism, in how women act as individuals, and through collective strategic engagement (Di Chiro 2011, Cockburn 2012, Mellor 2012, 2013). In my argument, emphasized femininity resistance, challenges the dominance of men in environmental governance and their leadership of nuclear industries plus the extrapolation of resource-based energy (Leahy 2003, MacGregor 2010, 2014). Also, women environmentalists’ demonstrate agentic competence, highlighting that emphasized femininity is an empowering women-led strategy, evidenced in anti-nuclear-toxic-waste campaigns, thereby, challenging the ruling class masculinist control of global governance.



Women participants from my study, especially mature or older women, highlight their landmark anti-nuclear activist in the South Pacific region, ranging from protests against French tests to current 'nuclear-framed' anti-toxic debates. For example, academic activist Maggie's ([audio] 2010) leadership is demonstrated in her historical to contemporary advocacy in anti-nuclear eNSM campaigns, ranging from the 1970s campaign against French tests in the South Pacific to more recent actions against uranium mining. On this note, Maggie frames her anti-nuclear advocacy in the context of oppressive hierarchical or indeed patriarchal structures: 'I hate hierarchy...we need a revolution. I don't mean blood and guts but I mean a revolution. We had a revolution against the French tests and uranium mining...' (Maggie [audio] 2010). In this anti-nuclear revolutionary framework, Maggie, a long-term activist, identifies the hierarchical and patriarchal barriers, framing nuclear energy and nuclear arms proliferation. Maggie's ([audio] 2010) ambition is 'to abolish nuclear weapons...to close down all the nuclear power plants in the world and to stop uranium mining...another level to stop global warming'. Thus, nuclear technology, as a form of energy power and androcentrism, is a core barrier for a sustainable planet, yet academic activists' comprehension and challenge to this technology is critical for a safer world.

In support to academic activist resistance to nuclear power and the proliferation of nuclear arms plus missiles, the Greens party and its members have long fought against nuclear technology. Framed within a South Pacific geopolitical context, women participants' from the Greens party, outline their strong resistance to nuclear technology. For the Greens, in policy, principles and practice, nuclear power is a matter of contentious objection (Australian Greens, *Our Policies*, 2018). In the following excerpt, Green's participant Stacey ([audio] 2010), outlines that the party was constituted by members of 'the Nuclear Disarmament Party' along with other environmental groups that rejected patriarchal structures and conservative ideologies in favour of grassroots democracy social change. Other Greens parties around the world may be appraised for their advocacy of peace and advocacy of social change, whereby women's leadership is a defining part of anti-nuclear engagement (Maleta 2011, Carter 2013, Raunio 2015, Gauja and Jackson 2016). The attraction of the Greens is in its ability to engage the community to climate action akin to an ecological grassroots democratic model, inclusive of the community:

... lots of the people that came to the Greens came out of the peace movement... it was made from the Nuclear Disarmament Party, environmental groups, social justice groups. They moved from the other parties because it was so patriarchal; it was a top-down approach whereas the Greens are about the grassroots... that is how our model works and how we do our decision-making... promoting grassroots democracy and everybody has a chance to be involved, particularly for me the political process and to be an active community member (Stacey [audio] 2010).

The above account highlights the way in which peace and social change, aligned with an anti-nuclear strategic approach, frame women's ideological engagement and membership of a political party. Other mature women in my study, including Greens women, demonstrate a bold, proud history in social change campaigns that challenge the male hegemonic dominance, contributing scholarly insights to peace versus war and androcentrism (Warren 1997, 1999, Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, Cockburn 2012). Greens politician, Jennifer, points to women's collective anti-war resistance:

... one of the most exciting actions was in 1983 when 700 women camped outside Pine Gap, a U.S. military installation outside Alice Springs... a very powerful action by these hundreds of women to say no to war. I had a real pleasure working with those women and I learnt a great deal at the time (Jennifer [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon this excerpt, women's agency was demonstrated by a powerful collective actionist event, outside Pine Gap, shrouded by brave anti-war protests. A peaceful approach also framed women's activism. Grassroots participatory democratic action should be esteemed as critical to the future of a world without nuclear energy and nuclear missiles. The media plays a decisive role in education and motivating grassroots-action, knowledge, competence as well as encouraging social change. Participant's prowess in media skills signifies their social and technical competency, and ability to comprehend nuclear technology. Evidently, the media, represents an empowering technical tool that strengthens women activists' social change scope and capacity to inform other potential actors within the eNSM. Maggie ([audio] 2010) points out that she has achieved significant status internationally, as a public orator. Such anti-nuclear advocacy is aided by the media, as a form of technical competence: 'People follow me...I need more media attention, so I can educate all the people, and the only way to do that is through the media' (Maggie [audio] 2010).

In retrospect, educating the grassroots towards democratic action is a core role of the media. As an expert, long-term activist, who is also a grandmother, Maggie, emphasizes the power of democratic action, as a community tool, in how individuals, as citizens of a democracy, can engage with politicians to act for their concerns:

If you don't use your democracy you don't deserve to live in it and that doesn't mean voting every 3 years. That means getting out and making sure your representatives, who are the politicians, represent you, the interests of your children, the environment, the world, and don't represent the interests of the big companies who they currently do (Maggie [audio] 2010).

In relation to this account, women-led grassroots strategies, defined by 'democracy', 'the interests of your children, the environment', in contrast to 'the interests of the big companies', is required in order to achieve social and environmental change. Democratic action, thereby, is relative to one's sociopolitical engagement and participatory action, be it as a mother concerned about the future of their children along with the natural world. In turn, a corporate critique, as an ultimate barrier, is situated against this framework. Yet the economic and financial (profit-driven) interests of corporates are viewed as a barrier to desired sociopolitical change, informing a more sustainable future, in which women play a significant leadership role (Rankin and Gale 2003, Di Chiro 2011, Mellor 2012, Alston 2013, Clean Energy Council 2014, Shiva 2014). More grassroots awareness of the dire state of the planet, often at the hands of hu(man) mismanagement, is needed in order to spur on a global social change initiative, essentially from the bottom up. It is up to us or indeed humankind to be responsible for our actions and to prevent further poisoning of the natural environment, whereby women play a critical leadership role. Women's leadership is crucial to challenge the patriarchal power-based control of organisational governance: 'We're (women) not into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act' (Maggie [audio] 2010).

## **The Framing of Anti-Toxic-Waste Activism within the eNSM**

Toxic waste pollution is also an issue taken up by women members of environmental social movement organisations (eSMOs); framing anti-toxic waste as part of anti-nuclear social change advocacy. Regarding the poisoning of the planet, eNGO director, Barbara advocates against for the industrial pollution of chemicals, by companies, upon the environment, encompassing human and nonhuman dimensions.

Oh, yes, that's sort of a toxic, but the issue I am really interested in is chronic poisoning through the distribution of tens of thousands of man-made chemicals. And some natural elements like mercury and lead, through the environment into the food chain... I was always on the brown ecology side, on the industrial pollution... See, you can't have that without these hazardous chemicals, you know?... It's very hard to shift people's views (Barbara [audio] 2010).

The above critique of toxic waste pollution plus industrial chemical pollution relative to cultural conservatism, or even the fact that this is due to 'tens of thousands of man-made chemicals' along with the challenge that 'it's very hard to shift people's views', highlights that hu(man)kind is a key culprit and the institutionalisation management or perhaps mismanagement of such industrial chemicals. One could even add that toxic waste pollution is a form of patriarchal 'industrialised' poisoning. In general, chemical or industrial waste, is dumped in locales at a distance from urban populations. Yet regional communities have long resisted to their locales being used as toxic waste dumps. U.S. ecofeminist Gaard (2001) noted the grassroots resistance of women activists' in regional communities, advocating against the establishment of a water energy company, whereby concern for the environment and health of residents intersected within anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-classist frameworks.

Regarding the framework of anti-war activism and peace activism, contextualised by the progressive social movements of the late sixties and early seventies, Barbara pinpoints her interest in anti-industrial pollutants, yet poignantly linked to a nurturing identity and the role of mother:

... one of my main drivers on my work on pollution was because the chemicals; we did tonnes of work on birth defects... and on breast feeding protection against bottles, sticking bottles in newborn babies mouths'... a lot of my early justice work... the mother and the child, their right to healthy reproduction. And there was a lot of political elements... (Barbara [audio] 2010).

A nurturing ethos, contextualised by sociopolitical frames of justice and equity, relative to the rights of 'the mother and child' highlight essentialized elements, in which the role of mother and 'their right to healthy reproduction', further frames constructivist activist goals, aspiring for 'healthy production'. In relation to the above eNGO account, essentialized and constructivist dimensions intersect, framed by the rights of the mother along with environmental change ambitions (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, Di Chiro 2011, Maleta 2012, 2015). Such accounts seemingly reflect degrees of personal and professional responsibility towards those affected by toxic pollutants and chemicals. Professional engagement, encompassing responsibility, is further evident in my academic excerpts. Anti-toxic waste initiatives, as a form of environmental protection and social responsibility, from an organisational and ethical perspective also inform the agenda of academic women campaigners. For instance, Rachel, who is a university lecturer and

barrister by trade, outlines her professional academic interests and career goals, aligned with a scientific leadership is in anti-radiation-nuclear initiatives:

... I have been practicing as a barrister... for nearly 20 years now; I also have the academic interests of corporate social responsibility, environmental protection, and of course radiation, law and energy law (Rachel [audio] 2010).

Academic advocate, Rachel, as an advisor on environmental protection, explains how her consultancy role ensures that nuclear facilities are safe. In the proposed building of a second nuclear reactor in Lucas Heights, a suburb of Sydney, Rachel commented how her organisation inspected the new reactor development:

Lucas Heights is under the Commonwealth government's jurisdiction... the members of [omit] were taken out to Lucas Heights. We inspected the facility before it was formally handed to the Commonwealth government (Rachel [audio] 2010).

Rachel's environmental protection agenda, is aligned with anti-solarium advocacy, encompassing the framework of protecting women's health. On that note, radiation can poison women's bodies and cause life-long detrimental health effects. As a lawyer and advocate, Rachel has a role in attempting to regulate such legislation:

Solaria should be regulated, that they are dangerous... sources of ultraviolet radiation which naturally damages your skin... It wasn't until some poor girl died of melanoma, cancer in [omit] that all of the state governments suddenly said, oh, goodness, we have to do something about this (Rachel [audio] 2010).

Additionally, Rachel is involved in anti-uranium action, pertaining to polluting and dangerous radiation effects of 'an old uranium smelter' in an up-market suburb:

I don't know if you are aware that at [omit] there was an old uranium smelter, where they built houses on that, and so the [omit organisation] had to go in and clean it up to make it safe... we've been monitoring that and making sure... getting reports back as to the radiation levels... (Rachel [audio] 2010)

The above excerpts demonstrate that anti-nuclear-anti-toxic-waste campaigning is integral to the global eNSM and that such (in)justice issues are still pressing concerns in urban as well as regional locales, inclusive of the developed and developing world (Gaard 2001, Culley and Angelique 2003, Shiva 2008, 2014). Yet women, in a professional and grassroots capacity, are challenging the proliferation of dangerous pollutants through rigorous advocacy and activist efforts. Women's leadership, therefore, represents agentic competence, exemplifying constructivism, as an organisational-gendered performance. Gender differences, in my participatory accounts, also showcase how performativity is framed by gender differences in anti-nuclear campaigning. On this point, eNGO advocate Deborah adds how her organisation has a greater representation of men in anti-nuclear plus climate change advocacy, suggesting that gender performativity is differentiated and that men and men do perform their roles in different areas:

... the climate change team, it's all men whereas the green home team, it's all women... Some areas tend to attract men; our two nuclear campaigners are both men. I think climate change attracts men to the economics. It's more of a hard science as opposed to a soft science... I find the biodiversity side more interesting (Deborah [audio] 2010).

Drawing upon gendered performances, academic activist Maggie ([audio] 2010) criticised women for letting men take over rather than stepping into 'our own power'. Maggie ([audio] 2010) embraces women-led strategies of aspiring to confidence and attributes of 'nurturing' and 'intrinsic value of life'. This also suggests an essentialist position. However, women need to argue for change and to not act like men, Maggie (2010) adds. A policy reform is suggested by Maggie in order to minimise glass ceilings:

There should be a law that 53% of every corporation, academic, Parliamentary body is women. The magic number is 30% below which women tend to vote to please the males, above which they say, no, you're not getting your missiles today. We're voting for milk for children. That's got nothing to do with political lines. It's across the board, because we're nurturing and understand the intrinsic value of life. We're not into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act. ... I'm talking about women. When there are very few women in power they behave as men to rise up the ranks... (Maggie [audio] 2010).

This account reflects essentialist views of women and femininity, with women being described as 'nurturing' and women not being 'into power and that terribly nasty stuff that men tend to play act'. This account suggests that women's nurturing qualities are an empowering form of competence to initiate change. However, Maggie criticises women politicians who act like men in order to achieve power. Maggie's condemnation of women lacking 'the guts to do what is necessary' was underpinned by her case for a gender equity law. Also, women need to exercise power and reject the supreme power of men and hegemonic elitism in order for social change to be realised. Yet, glass ceilings informed by ruling class masculinity and hierarchy, present barriers to women's leadership within corporations and Parliament (Connell 2005, 2009, Pollack 2015).

In the grassroots analysis, Gillian ([audio] 2009) pointed out that her organisation avoids hierarchical people and hierarchical structures, and that Greenham Common is a role model for Australian women campaigners. Participatory accounts demonstrate that men and women work well together, especially when men embrace a Greens justice ethic. Gender diversity is further strengthened by apolitical practices, consensus-based principles and a justice ethic. In relation to Gillian ([audio] 2009), her grassroots group is characterised by fluid engagement and less hierarchy, which frames critiques on patriarchal INGOs and hierarchical renewable boards (Rankin and Gale 2003, Carnegie Clean Energy 2018). In the Climate Summit, Gillian ([audio] 2009) condemned the way some of large NGOs 'wanted control of the communication of the group, whereas it was a grassroots summit'. Yet the rigorous integration of a grassroots approach challenged hierarchy. Gillian's excerpt also points to the importance of peace and silence as an engagement strategy, whereby women members of Greenham Common are role models:

... some women have done things that are more passive, like the Vigil outside

town hall. The Women in Black, they were against injustices rather than environmental, but they were just standing, and just have a presence, and hand out leaflets without saying anything at all. In the U.K., who were against the nuclear power stations [the Greenham Common] had some good ones (Gillian [audio] 2009).

## Conclusion

Core thematic insights on anti-nuclear-toxic-waste resistance have emerged from my qualitative interview analysis, thereby, highlighting women's emphasized femininity leadership, framed by patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity as a barrier, and women-led agentic technical competence as an enabler (Connell 1995, Cockburn 1988, Culley and Angelique 2003, 2010, Maleta 2012, 2015). In my overall qualitative analysis with women eNSM participants', empirical snapshots pinpointing anti-nuclear themes on 'hierarchy, 'that terrible nasty stuff that men tend to play act', 'the interests of the big companies', 'distribution of tens of thousands of man-made chemicals', 'sticking bottles in newborn babies mouths', 'they moved from other parties because it was so patriarchal' enables me to develop a critique of hegemonic masculinity and men's leadership styles, while contributing knowledge. Whereas examples of 'to abolish nuclear weapons', 'to close down all the nuclear power plants in the world and to stop uranium mining' plus 'we're [women] not into power', 'a very powerful action by these hundreds of women to say no to war', 'the interests of your children', and 'we're nurturing and 'understand the intrinsic value of life', therefore, enables me to emphasize women's leadership competence and the power of emphasized femininity, as a viable 'alternative' resistance strategy towards the ruling power of masculinist elites within environmental governance.

Thus far, the anti-nuclear plus anti-toxic waste eNSMs are significant sites of social, cultural and political engagement, whereby women perform agentic competence through emphasized femininity leadership, whilst constructing empowering identities. Women are scientifically and technically literate, and their capacity to contribute knowledge- in professional and grassroots contexts, is an empowering premise for social change. Culley and Angelique's (2003, 2010) study on Three Mile Island anti-nuclear campaigners, highlighted how grassroots women activists, without formal training appropriated their roles by self-training through learning about nuclear technology. They acquired technical competence on this technology and were able to advocate intellectual and practical solutions in their resistance to nuclear power plants. Women's technical leadership aspiring towards environmental change should not be underestimated. Nonetheless, the power of men, as an example of ruling class hegemonic masculinity, remains a challenge for women's leadership equity. Such framing presents a barrier for women's performative social agendas (Cockburn 2012, Maleta 2011, 2012, Butler 2013).

Conclusively, women's agentic technical competence and emphasized femininity leadership resistance to patriarchy and ruling class masculinity within the anti-nuclear-anti-toxic-waste eNSM, is aligned with an empowering constructivist/essentialist framing of (in)justice/(in)equity, whereby my findings contribute knowledge to feminism, qualitative methodologies and NSM studies. Participants' gender performativity and resistant femininities undermines essentialist labels of female incompetency, whilst integrating feminism as an empowering grassroots and professional advocacy strategy, inclusive of the Women's and Environmentalist New Social Movements.

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